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United States Senate

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FCC Mail Room

The Honorable Tom Wheeler
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street Southwest
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

I write to express my deep concern about the impact of Federal Communications Commission's Wireline Competition Bureau's announcement that it will modify the "rate floor," which will increase the price of phone service for over one million phone customers in rural America. The decision not only contradicts Congressionally-mandated policy, but it also provides no benefit to the federal government.

The Communications Act requires the FCC to make telephone service "affordable." While the initial plan to raise the rate floor from \$14 to \$20.46 may be modified for a slower phase in, I remain concerned that about the policy objectives of raising the rate floor. This decision to raise rates only makes phone service less affordable in rural areas, where incomes are lower and families have fewer telecommunications options. Furthermore, the rate floor is designed so that the Universal Service Fund will still distribute the same support to rural telephone companies, providing no savings to taxpayers.

In addition, a major priority of the *2011 Universal Service Transformation Order* was to transition the fund to support broadband service instead of phone service. As I expressed to you in the recent Financial Services and General Government Subcommittee on Appropriations hearing, many Kansans receive both broadband and phone service from the same company. Increasing phone creates an even greater challenge for rural telephone companies who provide broadband service with no federal support for that service.

The goal of universal service requires thoughtful policy attention. I urge the Commission to freeze the rate floor indefinitely and review this policy.

Very truly yours,

Jerry Moran

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Cc: Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Cc: Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel
Cc: Commissioner Ajit Pai
Cc: Commissioner Michael O'Reilly

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